

THE EYE SHIELD



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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue 43 of The Eye Shield. I'm very pleased to report that this issue is overflowing with reader contributions, which is fantastic! Prolific contributor Chris Stallard presents *Close, But No Cigar*, which gives the lowdown on those teams that reached the very brink of victory (by reaching level three) only to have their hopes cruelly dashed on the home strait. If you have often thought that some level three performances were more deserving of a win than some of the actual winners, check out where your favourite almost-champions have ended up in Chris's top sixteen. It's a detailed, thought-provoking piece, Chris - thanks again for sending it in.

Elsewhere, Gary Day begins his account of the adventures of the young knight errant whose journey up to Nightmare Castle is the first thing we see at the start of every episode in series 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, as he presents the epic tale *The Adventurer's Adventure*. This story (or playscript, as it might be more accurately described) began its life on the Nightmare Forum, but has now found a home within the loving bosom of The Eye Shield. The Adventurer is bold, cunning, witty and skilful, and has something of an eye for pretty young Dungeon maids; his adventures will keep you enthralled for many issues to come, readers. Gary, my heartfelt thanks are reaching out to you from your computer screen even now.

As for Richard Temple's never-ending saga, *Trade in the Old for the New*, it's finally coming to an end! Yes, at last the time has come to discover the thrilling conclusion to this tale of scheming, espionage, magic and mayhem, and it's a conclusion that may surprise you, readers. Thanks again for the story, Richard - it's certainly been a suspenseful read.

Interestingly enough, the final part of this story follows on from my sister Rosey's latest Big Issue, which compares Honesty Bartram and Julius Scaramonger. Just think, all of Rosey's observations and opinions may become obsolete if Lord Fear manages to achieve his evil goal of joining the two traders together in one body...

Now, if any of you are in need of an index of Classic Quest entries, check out the Website Feedback section of the Nightmare Forum, where Drassil has set up just such an entity. I was pleasantly surprised to see that someone had taken the time and effort to make this useful little reference to my (and some of Paul McIntosh's, Tim Morris's and Chris

Griffin's) work, so thanks for that, Drassil. Further to this, some of Drassil's other comments on the forum have prompted me at last to join the ranks of posters myself, under the unoriginal yet fitting name of Eyeshield. I'll now be joining in with any forum discussion relating to TES, and other Nightmare-related things as well no doubt, but I still want your e-mails, articles and stories, so get writing to the address at the end of this section!

You all know how pleased I am when I get an e-mail from a fellow original Eye Shield reader, so you can imagine how happy I was to receive the following correspondence from Dave Stone.

Just popped in to take a look at The Eye Shield; I can't believe it's still going after all this time! Keep up the excellent work. It's people like you who are keeping Nightmare alive and kicking.

Thanks, Dave – I'm glad you're still enjoying TES after all this time. I'm always very grateful for your messages of appreciation and support, readers, but I'm always particularly pleased to know that some of those original few of us who used to read Paul McIntosh's fanzine are still reading and enjoying The Eye Shield after all these years. Thanks again for writing, Dave.

The following e-mail comes from Donna McMahon.

I was browsing the internet the other day and came across the Nightmare site. I was reading your input and I like the way you have taken the time to explain various elements of the show that brought many a joy to children's Friday afternoons. I can only hope it will be brought back, as it most certainly would be successful, with the current fantasy interest in today's market. Keep up the great work.

Thanks for writing, Donna. It's certainly true that a lot of new films and TV programmes in recent years have taken a step back in time towards the Golden Age of Nightmare, but the problem with bringing the programme back now, as I (and others) have often said, would be its inevitable over-reliance on virtual reality and computer-generated characters, creatures and even dungeoneers! If Nightmare were to return as it was before (which is about as likely as Tim Henman emulating that guy from that film with Kirsten Dunst in it by winning Wimbledon in his early thirties) that would be fantastic, but anything else... well, it just wouldn't be tennis!

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 4. Level 1.

THE CASTLE OF DOOM

As we are all well aware, many changes took place for the fourth series of Nightmare, perhaps the most notable of which was the inclusion of pre-recorded eye shield sequences leading from room to room. I am well aware of how unpopular these are, and I agree that they do waste a lot of time. However, locations such as the Castle of Doom helped to give some definite structure to the Dungeon, which I quite liked, personally.

After a team had answered Oakley's questions and chosen their level one clue objects, they progressed either to the Castle of Doom or Dungarth, which was the final port of call in level one. The clue objects would have to be used here before the wellway to level two was discovered. Of the eight teams in series 4, only three ended up at the Castle of Doom.

The first team of the series (Helen's) visited the Castle of Doom, where they had to bribe Fatilla with a bar of gold, and then use the Dagger of Darkness to slip past the Armoured Behemoth and enter the wellway. Treguard gave us a chilling introduction to the castle: "I don't know how we got here, but I know this fortress. It's called Doom, and it's not inaptly named!" - Treguard. However, as you should know by now, the fortress is actually called Castle Rising!

The series's second dungeoneer, Alistair, also entered the Castle of Doom, walking a longer, more interesting route than Helen had taken. He entered through the bailey gate, where he had to flatter Fatilla (although he was actually supposed to bribe the guard with a bar of gold; surprise, surprise) and then walked up a path towards the main keep, which could be easily recognised from Helen's quest. Goblins pursued Alistair along the path, so he had to throw down some aniseed to throw them off the scent.

The final appearance of the Castle of Doom was in Simon's somewhat erratic quest, although it was rather too short for my liking. Simon entered the castle from the same direction as Helen, leaving Alistair's little jaunt around the grounds as the sole occasion those particular eye shield sequences were used. Simon had to blow a horn to deafen a pair of goblins, and then turn over an hourglass to freeze a giant lizard.

All four subsequent dungeoneers after Simon (as well as Nicky before him) ended up at Dungarth instead of the Castle of Doom, which was a shame in a way, as the location was somewhat underused, in my humble opinion at least. Still, let's not dwell on it...

Difficulty: 5 Two objects required to exit level one.

Killer Instinct: 0 No deaths occurred here, and were not likely to.

Gore Factor: 0 As above.

Fairness: 9 A fair way to finish off the level, although I'm sure series 3 purists would disagree with me.

ADVENTURE TIME

The never-ending journey through the Nightmare Dungeon continues, with the score standing at Dungeon 12, Humans 5. A fresh quest now begins as we join dungeoneer Calum at the start of level one.

Calum's quest begins in the level one clue room. The table contains a small brass key, a bar of gold and a vase of rather sickly-looking flowers.

"Don't touch yet, team," Treguard warns. "All these things must be earned."

Predictably, the far wall transforms into the menacing features of Brangwen, the wall monster.

"Stay where you are, human!" Brangwen orders threateningly. "You may not have passage until you have pleased me; fail to do so and I feed on you. I have three mysteries, and here is the first. I have sharp teeth; more than a few. I'll not die if you run me through. What am I?"

The team chatter and deliberate for a while, but they don't really have any idea what the answer is.

"Think about where on your body you might run this item through, team," Treguard advises helpfully.

"Mouth," says Calum at length.

"Falsehood!" Brangwen declares. "Comb was the truth I sought. Here is the second. Take off my skin - I won't cry, but you will. What am I?"

"An onion," Calum replies at once.

"Truth accepted," says Brangwen. "Here is the third. What is it that the more you take, the more you leave behind you?"

"Is that a version of that hole riddle everyone always asks?" queries an advisor.

"No, but it's similar!" Calum declares in a burst of inspiration. "Footsteps!"

"Truth accepted," Brangwen says again. "Two is the score; you may learn more. The treasure you need if you are to escape this level is safely locked away, and you must discover how to release it. Remember, the first step is football, but it is not the next step. The quest is for the Talisman, yet you may not hold it."

With that, Brangwen disappears. The advisors discuss the wall monster's clues, and decide that taking the key would be a good first step to releasing the treasure of which Brangwen has spoken. They also decide to take the flowers, as the gold is clearly treasure in its own right, but cannot be the treasure they need as it is not locked away. Calum then moves on to the next chamber, which turns out to be the grand dining hall

of Queen Kalina. The self-proclaimed ruler of the first level is laying out plates and cutlery for several guests. She looks up and frowns at Calum when he announces himself.

"I haven't got time for dungeoneers right now," Kalina scowls. "Can't you see I've got a dinner party to get ready for? I've got out all my best silverware, but somehow the table doesn't quite seem complete. It needs a centrepiece of some kind, I fancy, but I really don't think I've got anything suitable."

"Well, well, Calum, Kalina certainly is in a fix," Treguard chuckles. "What a shame you haven't got something suitable to give her so that she can complete her beautiful dinner table. But wait! Perhaps you have..."

"Would you like these flowers?" asks Calum. "I'm sure they're just the kind of thing to make your beautiful table complete."

Kalina frowns dubiously, but she takes the vase of flowers from Calum and places it in the middle of the table. Happily, this brings a smile to her face.

"Oh thank you, dungeoneer, they're perfect!" Queen Kalina croons warmly. "Now my dinner party is sure to be a success. In return, know these two snippets of information as the truth. The treasure you seek lies behind the shrine that breathes the air. The password for this level is ocean."

Kalina returns to her dinner preparations, so the advisors guide Calum out of the room. He emerges into a small cave where two long rectangular chests are leaning up against the wall, each with an identical padlock on the front. One chest contains a picture of a blue whale; the other is decorated with the likeness of a great white shark.

"Well, a choice awaits you here, team," Treguard remarks. "The treasure you seek lies behind one of these two shrines, but which one should you open?"

"Hey, this is kind of like that game on The Crystal Maze..." starts one of the advisors.

"No it's not!" Treguard snaps. "It's a completely original idea!"

"Well, we should open the whale because it's a mammal, and breathes air," says the advisor, who is a bit of a know-it-all. "The shark's a fish so it breathes water."

Calum is directed over to the whale shrine, and he unlocks it with the key. He finds it impossible to remove the tiny artefact from the padlock once it has been inserted, underlining the need to choose the correct shrine first time. Inside the shrine, Calum finds a small green object that looks a bit like a bar of soap, but is hard to the touch.

"It's a dragon mint," he tells his advisors. "This must be the treasure we

were told to find."

The advisors direct Calum out of the cave, into a pink room with a thin black door. Before they can instruct him further, a grey wall shoots in and blocks the door, before grating towards Calum and forming into a menacing face.

"Password!" the blocker demands.

"Ocean!" Calum declares.

The blocker makes itself scarce, and Calum is directed out. He finds himself on the large green mass of scales that forms Smirkenorff's back. The dragon turns around to look at him.

"Ah, greetings, Calum," Smirkenorff rumbles. "Welcome to the end of the first part of your adventure. If you've brought me what I want, I'll take you where you want to go. And you needn't look so surprised about it - I know I don't tend to get out much anymore, but it's nice to take a little trip now and then to stretch the old wings. Well, what have you brought me?"

"This dragon mint," Calum replies, holding the green object out before him.

"Excellent," Smirkenorff approves. "Well, let's not hang around all day. Sit yourself down in the saddle, and leave the dragon mint in the pouch provided if you would."

The advisors direct Calum onto the saddle, and he places the mint into the pouch before him. Smirkenorff flaps his wings and takes off into the sky. The advisors see him flying over hills, forests and rivers until he comes in to land inside the courtyard of a ruined castle.

"Well, here we are," Smirkenorff announces. "Off you go then, and good luck in level two. Oh yes, by the way, you won't get very far unless you remember this - the second step is tennis, but it is not the next step."

Calum thanks the dragon for his help, then the advisors direct him off Smirkenorff's back, down his tail. There is a portal in the castle wall nearby, which Calum uses to enter the second level.

What trials and tests await Calum in level two? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.

CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR

By Chris Stallard

Rather than rating the teams that managed to conquer the Dungeon, this article looks at the teams that made it to level three but, for whatever reason, failed to push on to victory. It has often been stated by some fans that certain teams were very unlucky not to win, and therefore this article focuses on them. This includes teams who perished in level three, as well as teams that were "timed out" by the end of the series whilst on the final level. As I will be focusing on teams that made it to level three, I will rank the teams by an overall rating, which is split into four marks-out-of-ten categories:

Appeal - How much did the team grow on the watchers?

Excitement - Were there many memorable moments in the quest?

Intelligence - The old chestnut; did the team condemn themselves by their own actions?

Luck - A low rating helps here. How lucky were the team to progress, and how unlucky were they not to win?

So, with all that being as clear as the "opposite" riddles that led to the downfall of Vicky & co in series 4, here are the teams in reverse order:

16. Oliver, David, Matthew & Anthony, from Leicestershire. (Series 8)

Not much can be said in favour of this team, the last ever to challenge the Dungeon. They benefited from the same Short Cut that Dunston & co used (we won't go into that one...) but unlike Dunston's team, they seemed to have no teamwork skills, reasoning or ability, and their progress to level three seemed to be a strange decision on the part of the production team, as they were only ten minutes or so away from the end of the season when the quest began.

It seemed as if the crew were determined to have one last team in the final level before the end, but this progress seemed to be a bit much - Oliver made it to level three after just five minutes! This team would never have won, as they often argued, and would not have got anywhere without some serious help from the producers.

Appeal - The final team of the programme should have been memorable to all, but it didn't work out that way! 3

Excitement - No chance to get any excitement developed as the quest

was too short. 4

Intelligence - Again, too short to tell. They didn't have enough time either to excel or to embarrass themselves. 5

Luck - Best not to go into that one, methinks... 9

Overall - A gift appearance in level three. The team would never have won and would not even have come close without major intervention. 3.5

15. Alan, Jim, Nick & Mark, from St. Albans. (Series 6)

A slow yet solid team, who were the first of three to reach the final level in series 6. In my opinion, this team benefited from taking part in a series that can be classed as being slightly too easy, as only seven teams took part, yet three reached the elite final level, and no teams fell in level one. Level one for Alan was fairly uneventful (as was the case for most teams in this series) as the team simply had to encounter Sly and agree to meet him in the tavern, and then dispel the bizarre-looking samurai that was molesting Ah Wok!

They ended up at the tavern with Sly and gained the causeway code from Ridolfo. (Slightly circular...) Level two saw the team encounter a depressed Sidriss, who was cheered up later with a BEAUTY spell, which was obtained from Heggaty. (Again, this seemed very circular. I was not a fan of encountering a problem, gaining a solution and then going back to the problem...) They then memorably dealt with Lord Fear by crushing his hand with a magic gauntlet. (What a shame Chris & co couldn't have used that on Mogdred back in 1988!)

Level three again saw a circular development, as the team left Elita on the ship, only to encounter her again to learn what they needed to progress - a firestone. However, the team's slow approach was soon punished in the severest possible fashion, as Alan was too slow for the frightknight on the causeway. Surprisingly for level three, it was not the Great Causeway.

Appeal - Slow and not brilliant to watch. 4

Excitement - Again, slow. Their quest seemed circular, with much repetition that did not seem entirely necessary, although it can be said that this was as much the fault of the producers as of the team. 4

Intelligence - Their slow yet solid approach showed good judgment and ensured the correct decision was usually made. 7

Luck - No extra luck, but their demise was entirely due to their overly cautious approach. 5

Overall - Blimey, they were hard to watch! The quest was slow and cautious to the point of lunacy, and whilst the circular nature of the quest did not help, most teams in series 6 experienced a slow level one before progressing to a more entertaining performance. Not so this lot! It is argued by many observers that Treguard and Pickle could not hide their relief when this team was finished off, and it is not surprising, having had to sit through this quest... 4.5

14. Chris, Paul, Kenneth & Chris, from St. Helens. (Series 2)

The first team to really put up much of a challenge in series 2, following two mediocre quests from Martin and Claire. This team seemed to be quite nervous in places (such as the Mills of Doom, and even with friendly characters such as Bumptious) and often seemed to turn to Treguard for hints. This nervousness only seemed to worsen as the quest progressed, as the advisors began to resort to barking their orders out to the dungeoneer and becoming rather het-up if he didn't comply instantly, such as when Mogdred's hand began to chase after the dungeoneer in the wellway room before level three.

The team never struck me as being "the stuff of legend" and, watching the quest, the team gives the impression, unfairly or not, that they are always one room away from disaster. It was no surprise that they made such an early error in level three, when they left the shield behind in the clue room, and were memorably "stoned" by Medusa.

Appeal - As I have said, they struck me as nervous and unsettled, and were therefore difficult to take to. 4

Excitement - Their nervous approach made interaction with others difficult, and whilst they successfully tackled obstacles such as the Mills of Doom, they did so steadily but slowly. 5

Intelligence - They were sensible in taking their time and not rushing into decisions, but like Richard & co from series 1, they made a poor error by taking a false object in level three. 5

Luck - Whilst they did gain hints from Treguard, particularly with Granitas, their cautious and thought-out approach meant luck was not a major factor. However, their failure to win was entirely their own fault. 5

Overall - Nervous, and never seemed likely to win. 5

13. Ross, Gavin, Fu & Shazard, from Birmingham. (Series 3)

Despite the fact that they made it to level three in such a difficult series, and despite the fact that, coming from Wolverhampton, these

lads from Birmingham are the closest thing I have to a "home team" on Nightmare, I felt that they suffered from the same problems as Chris & co from series 2, and never looked likely to win. Their level one seemed to drag on for too long, and they seemed quite uncomfortable and nervous.

They also needed hints from Treguard in the clue room, and seemed slow to react in certain situations, such as their first meeting with Mellisandre, a friendly, non-threatening character. However, they did improve as the quest went on, and seemed to be more comfortable in level two. In a way, they played the game well by stepping up the pace as the quest progressed. The conscripting of McGrew in level two illustrates this, as the team were quick to draw on his abilities to help them through the level, and were also quick to dispel Mogdred's TOAD spell. However, by level three the nerves seemed to return, as they realised they might actually do it, and the nervy and agonising fall from the narrow bridge rather summed up their effort.

Appeal - Again, they grew on the watchers as they progressed, but another team that always seemed like the next room could be their last. 5

Excitement - Lacked the excitement of the other two teams to make it to level three in series 3. 5

Intelligence - Had Treguard's help, but seemed fairly sharp. Their downfall was not down to idiocy. 8

Luck - Hints from Treguard and aid from McGrew. Their downfall was mainly due to nerves, which they previously seemed to have conquered. 5

Overall - Started off looking as if they wouldn't reach level two, but soon recovered. However, they never looked like winning. 5.5

And that's your lot for now, readers, but the countdown continues next time, so make sure you don't fall at the last hurdle before you have the chance to read it!

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Character Descriptions

These quotes all come from advisors - try to guess, remember or work out exactly which characters they are describing. Name the series, episode and dungeoneer if you can, but naming the individual advisor responsible for each quote would be going too far even for me!

- 1.) "Some goblins just came on, and then this... this..."
- 2.) "There's a man sitting on a box and he's got a long stick in his hands."
- 3.) "There's this big, fat, ugly person in front of you asking who you are."
- 4.) "A guy has now appeared on the throne."
- 5.) "That knight said something about not choosing the path of aggression."
- 6.) "There's a fairy in the middle of the room."
- 7.) "There's a sort of creature... a man, I think."
- 8.) "On your left is the... man with the white beard."
- 9.) "It's the jester!"
- 10.) "He's bald."
- 11.) "Right, he's got quite long blond hair; he was dressed in rich clothes, sort of red and cream; he's got the deer in a sack."
- 12.) "There's a large knight with a large two-handed sword."

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 2

Quest: The Shield.

Dungeoneer: Claire Tisdale.

Advisors: Kerry, Michelle and Cheryl.

Home town: Ludlow, Shropshire.

Team score: 3 out of 10.

This was the first all-girl team ever to appear on Nightmare. If the standard of the performance they put in is anything to go by, it's small wonder that it took seven years to find a female champion! (No offence, girls!)

Level One: After pulling the lever at the Wheel of Fate, the team is faced with a choice of four doors. The symbols on offer are a skull, an eye, a fire exit and a knight chessman. As this is not exactly a difficult challenge, Claire is guided through the knight's door. In the clue room, Igneous is on guard. With all three of the wall monster's questions answered correctly, Claire earns the password for level one (feldspar) and an elimination clue for the objects. Treguard's help is still required, however, to guide Claire into taking a string of pearls and a key from the table, leaving behind a metal cup, which apparently has a bitter taste to it. A brush with the Lion's Head and the Lasers sees Claire demonstrating her complete inability to walk in a straight line, and the challenge consequently takes unnecessarily long.

A quick stroll past a green monster that is breathing heavily leads to Lillith's domain. Lillith tries to trick Claire into walking over the edge of the pit, but the advisors are having none of it. Lillith eventually creates a bridge and allows Claire to cross, accepting the pearls as payment. She rewards the team with the spell LITTLE.

"For this LITTLE trinket, I will provide you with a LITTLE spell, and since you are intelligent enough to have come this LITTLE far into the Dungeon, you should know what that means!" - Lillith.

On a rocky ledge, Claire picks up an apple to restore her life force. She then goes on to meet the Troll, who announces his intentions to eat her. With heavy prompting from Treguard, the team cast LITTLE, shrinking the Troll so that he disappears out of sight. The wellway room follows,

where Gumboil is on guard. Claire is able to give him the password, so she is allowed to descend to the second level.

Level Two: The team's fate is sealed in the first chamber. Cedric (named here for the first time) is on guard, and poses his usual three riddles. With only one answered correctly, Claire is allowed to proceed, but without any help from the mad monk. There follows a quick escape from Ariadne, in the spider's first of many memorable appearances, and then Claire arrives in the clue room. Several objects are waiting on the table, including Casper by the look of things, but a cavernwraith is on guard. Without Cedric's magic to defeat the ghostly creature, Claire is doomed. The cavernwraith drifts towards her and drains her life force, bringing an all-too timely end to the quest.

Summary: An absolutely hopeless team who had no chance of winning - not much up top, very boring to watch, and the dungeoneer couldn't even walk in a straight line!

THE ADVENTURER'S ADVENTURE

By Gary Day

Prelude

The Adventurer completed his first quest many years ago, and has been in training since then at a local guild, where he aims to prove himself worthy of knighthood. He has been visited by Treguard (for whom he has the utmost respect) many times whilst at the guild. Treguard has been able to help him develop into an adept adventurer, capable of surviving by the use of both his sword-arm and his wits. The Adventurer has spent four years in preparation for his challenge for knighthood. It is on the stroke of midnight that he is awoken from his sleep, with Treguard standing at the end of his bed.

Treguard:

It would appear that you are now ready to embark on a quest for knighthood, young squire. Do you accept the challenge?

Adventurer:

I do accept the challenge, Treguard. What is it you would have me do?

Treguard:

I shall brief you when you arrive at my castle, as there is much to discuss. I shall return at the stroke of midnight tomorrow night, so spend today making any final preparations that you require. Upon my return, your quest shall have officially begun.

Adventurer:

Thank you, Treguard. I shall be ready for you tomorrow at the stroke of midnight.

Treguard:

Very well. Spellcasting: R-E-S-T.

With the casting of the spell, the Adventurer falls into a deep sleep. He awakes at sunrise and remembers the words of Treguard. He needs to pack everything that he requires to take with him. He prepares his horse for the journey ahead, and he also spends much of the day cleaning and preparing his armoury. He knows that any quest for knighthood will require him to defend the innocent, and that will usually be in combat, unlike during his previous experiences with Treguard, where combat was not a part of the quest. However, he senses that this will be a different type of quest altogether, although much will be similar. He wonders what type of quest he will be asked to complete, and what enemies and characters the adventure will contain. As midnight draws nearer, the Adventurer begins to contemplate the key rules that he has learned while at the academy, and tries to mentally prepare himself as best as he can for the ordeal ahead. At the stroke of midnight, the Adventurer is waiting by his horse in anticipation of Treguard's appearance. It does not take long before he is confronted by a familiar dark outline; it is a portal. He takes the reins of his steed and begins to lead his horse forwards.

It is strange for the Adventurer to be back in the throne room of Nightmare Castle. Treguard is sitting upon his throne, awaiting the Adventurer's arrival. Once Treguard sees the Adventurer, he stands up and approaches him.

Treguard:

Welcome back to Nightmare Castle, Adventurer. I have some good news and some not so good news for you. The good news is that your quest for knighthood will begin tonight; the bad news is that it cannot take place in my dungeons. I will be able to aid you with what knowledge I have, but even I do not know much about the dungeons you must travel to and conquer. You must cross the land to the Castle of Chivalry, and only once this castle is conquered will chivalry have been earned. I have a portal that will lead you to the outskirts of the castle. It would appear that Mogdred has been setting up a challenge there for a long time, and so some of the challenges may be similar to ones he has set before, but I suspect most will be fairly new and devious ideas that he has conjured up with the time he has had. There will be more information I can give you once you arrive at the castle, but your first task is to get there. Please do not hesitate on the path, for I would hate to see one fall before the first hurdle.

Adventurer:

Fear not, Treguard, for I am ready for the task at hand

Treguard:

You are indeed brave, Adventurer; possibly the bravest of all the dungeoneers to have completed my Dungeon. However, bravery must not be at the expense of wisdom and intelligence. Well, there is no purpose in delaying your quest any longer, so turn to face the portal and step boldly forwards with your steed.

The Adventurer mounts his steed and rides through the portal.

The Adventurer begins to ride forwards, towards the Castle of Chivalry. The path is straight and so the Adventurer picks up much speed along the path. It is then that a monster manages to come out from the ground and block his path. The Adventurer pulls on the reins, and the horse raises his front legs. The Adventurer decides that to avoid the monster would be the best course of action, and manages to ride towards the monster and leap over it, and continue on his journey. The Adventurer rides up the winding path towards the castle entrance and, as he ascends, he spies a prisoner in a cell looking out and pleading for aid. However, there is no obvious means to rescue him, so he continues to ascend towards the top. As the Adventurer reaches the top, he sees that the portcullis is loose and ready to fall. Without hesitation, the Adventurer rides forward at full speed to beat the falling portcullis. He manages to ride through the entranceway just before the portcullis falls.

Level 1

As the Adventurer enters the castle, he is blinded by a bright light, which forces him to fall off his steed. A cackle is heard, his steed disappears and then a large face appears. It is Mogdred.

Mogdred:

Ah, an adventurer. Look upon Mogdred, Adventurer; look upon Mogdred and quail!
You have survived the passageway into my castle, but you shall never leave here
alive. Mwwwwahahahaaaaahahahaaha!

*Mogdred's face disappears and the Adventurer enters a dungeon with four doors.
Above each door is a different symbol. The first has a picture of a frightknight, the
second has a picture of a red dragon, the third has a picture of a staff, and the fourth
has a picture of an elf. The Adventurer wonders what each picture is a symbol for.
The Adventurer wishes for some aid in deciphering the images, but then another face
appears. This time it is a much more familiar face; it is Treguard.*

Treguard:

Well done, Adventurer. You have survived the entrance to the castle and have
reached the Room of Choice. This is not my Dungeon, Adventurer, so you would do
well to heed any warnings from anyone you may meet here, as my knowledge is
somewhat restrictive. Here you must decide upon the adventure that you will
undertake. You may choose to fight and defeat a frightknight, fight and defeat a red
dragon, retrieve the Staff of Power, or free the elf captive. All quests are just and
noble, but you must choose your destiny.

*With that, Treguard's face disappears and the Adventurer is left all alone with the
choice to make. The Adventurer decides that fighting a frightknight or red dragon
may prove to be too difficult, so turns to the other two. He remembers the face of a
trapped person on his way up, and decides that he cannot leave the prisoner behind
bars. He chooses to rescue the elf and faces the doorway. After a deep breath, he
walks boldly forwards.*

*The Adventurer enters a red room with a large wall in front of him; exits are to the
right and left. He looks upon a table and sees a loaf of bread, a key, a bar of gold and
a lamp. The Adventurer is feeling very hungry and decides to devour the bread while
he contemplates which objects to take. As he finishes his bread, a face appears in the
wall before him. It is Igneous.*

Igneous:

I am Igneous of Legend. Face me or perish. Please me or depart in ignorance. Three
riddles I have, and truth I seek. One truth and you may pass, two will earn you
information, and three commands me. Fail all three and I feed on you! Here is my
first. A man approached the oracle, and he asked who the smartest person in the land
was. The oracle proclaimed this man to be it. Taught people, he did, but face trial he
did as well. Rather than exile, he drank hemlock and ended his life. Who is this man
that I speak of?

The Adventurer ponders for a moment and then realises the answer.

Adventurer:

Socrates.

Igneous:

Truth accepted. Here is my second. The greatest warrior of all time travelled overseas to a distant land. There he killed a prince in battle, but he was defeated by an arrow to the heel. Who is this warrior that I seek?

The Adventurer knows this one straightaway.

Adventurer:

Achilles.

Igneous:

Truth accepted. Here is my third. It tolerates the moon and stars, but cannot abide the sun. Banish it with torchlight and you'll see it turn and run. What is this I speak of?

The Adventurer ponders this question but does not know the answer. Straining for thought, he gets interrupted by Igneous.

Igneous:

AN ANSWER, NOW!

The Adventurer draws a blank, so just says the first thing to comes into his head.

Adventurer:

Nothingness.

Igneous:

Falsehood. Darkness was the truth I sought. Two is the score, you may learn more. The key to your success is not on the table. The password is battleaxe. Rock I was, and rock I now become.

Igneous begins to fade into the wall and the Adventurer turns to the table to look at the objects once more. The Adventurer heeds Igneous's advice and leaves the key, and so takes the gold and the lamp. The Adventurer faces the right-hand exit and walks forward.

The Adventurer enters a room that appears to be an empty tavern. It looks like it has been ransacked a few times recently. The tables are all broken and the chairs and stools are all destroyed, save for two stools around a small circular table. The barmaid is standing there, very distraught. She turns and sees the Adventurer, and approaches him to begin a conversation.

Marta:

'Ello, stranger. Sorry that the tavern is in a bit of a mess, but some goblins came in. They managed to trash the place and scare away my customers. Anyway, what can I do for you?

Adventurer:

I'm on a quest to free an elf from this castle; I was wondering whether you had any information that could help me find him.

Marta:

An elf, eh? I'm guessing that only Mogdred would be capable of capturing one of them, and he resides in the lower levels. To get there you need to find a well, and there is a well further ahead. You'll need to get past a guardian and a causeway to get to the well, though. I overheard that the causeway has a combination. I think it was red, blue, yellow, and it would keep looping like that. Not sure whether the traveller attempted the causeway, mind you, and I've never seen him since, but that's all I've heard about it. Is there anything else Marta can do for you?

Adventurer:

Is there anything else you can tell me about the path ahead?

Marta:

Hmmm, nothing springs to mind....

While Marta is mid-sentence, the sound of a goblin horn can be heard.

Marta:

You'd best be off, quick, Adventurer, as the goblins will be here soon, no doubt to ransack my tavern again! I'll never get this fixed if they keep breaking everything up!

Adventurer:

Fear not, my lady, for I shall defend you!

Will the Adventurer send the goblins packing, and earn Marta's eternal gratitude? Find out next time.

KNIGHTMARE TOP TEN

This is a list of the top ten Knightmare characters with the highest relative frequency of appearances. The reason I use the word relative is that each character's score is based on the number of episodes they could possibly have appeared in (i.e. the total number of episodes in all the series in which they featured or could have featured) divided by the number of episodes in which they actually appeared.

The final score (the character's relative frequency) tells you how often, on average, the character made an appearance during their time on the show. For example, Motley's time on the show spans series 3-8, which is a total of 88 episodes. Motley appeared in 28 of these episodes, giving him a relative frequency of one appearance every 3.1 episodes; because 88 divided by 28 equals three point one, to one decimal place.

Obviously, the more frequent a character's appearances, the lower their relative frequency score. Simple! All calculations are correct to one decimal place.

<u>Position.</u>	<u>Character.</u>	<u>Series Range.</u>	<u>Possible Episodes.</u>	<u>Total Episodes.</u>	<u>Relative Frequency.</u>
=1.	Treguard	1-8	112	112	1.0
=1.	Pickle	4-6	47	47	1.0
=1.	Majida	7-8	25	25	1.0
4.	Lord Fear	5-8	56	53	1.1
5.	Brollachan	7	15	13	1.2
6.	Lissard	7-8	25	20	1.3
7.	Snapper-Jack	8	10	7	1.4
=8.	Skarkill	5-6	31	18	1.7
=8.	Grimaldine	7	15	9	1.7
=8.	Romahna	7	15	9	1.7
=8.	Maldame	8	10	6	1.7

REMEMBER HER?

Series 5. Level 1/2.

GWENDOLINE THE GREEN WARDEN

Gwendoline was a large, intimidating woman who appeared frequently in the Greenwood during series 5. She was a Green Warden, meaning that it was her job to keep the forests clear of poachers, fur-trappers, hunters and other such bad sorts. She carried a bow and arrows and wore green (hence her Robin Hood like appearance) and treated any intruders in the forest, including dungeoneers, with extreme suspicion. Gwendoline was played by Juliet Henry-Massy.

Gwendoline was privy to a lot of useful snippets about both the Greenwood and the Dungeon, which meant that she could be very useful to dungeoneers, but only if she was convinced that they weren't out to do any harm to the fragile forest ecosystem. Sometimes the team would have to prove their intelligence to Gwendoline in order to gain her help, which came in the form of passwords, useful (even vital) snippets of information, or, in dungeoneer Kelly's case, a token (the Arrow of the Green Wardens) to present to the Gatemaster.

Lord Fear often made it clear that he found Gwendoline a complete nuisance because she was responsible for shooting many of his evil creatures she found in the Greenwood, mainly goblins and assassins. Gwendoline implied that she was the one responsible for blinding Skarkill in one eye, although Skarkill's attempts to get even with Gwendoline were never successful.

Gwendoline's longest (and perhaps best) appearance was with dungeoneer Sarah. Julius Scaramonger had killed a young deer, but Gwendoline was convinced that Sarah had done it. Armed with a bottle of poison but without the Arrow of the Green Wardens, Sarah had a very hard time convincing Gwendoline of her innocence. From this appearance, it became very clear that Gwendoline would certainly have killed a dungeoneer if she thought they deserved it, despite her purported allegiance to the Powers that Be.

Gwendoline was an important part of series 5, as there were a lot of scenes in the greenwood. She will never be remembered as one of the all-time greats, however, as, when all is said and done, she did only appear in

one series.

Fear Factor: 6 Very threatening and intimidating.

Killer Instinct: 2 Sarah was lucky to escape her rough justice.

Humour Rating: 1 Very seldom dropped her incredibly serious manner.

Oscar Standard: 7 Fair enough, I suppose, though a little one-dimensional.

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

Hedingham Castle, Halstead, Essex

Hedingham Castle. Vital Statistics:

Location: Castle Hedingham, near Halstead, Essex.

Century of Origin: 11th.

Also Known As: The Last Dungeon in Level Two.

Series featured in: 5 and 7.

These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, in September 2006. They were scanned by Rosey Collins in October 2006.

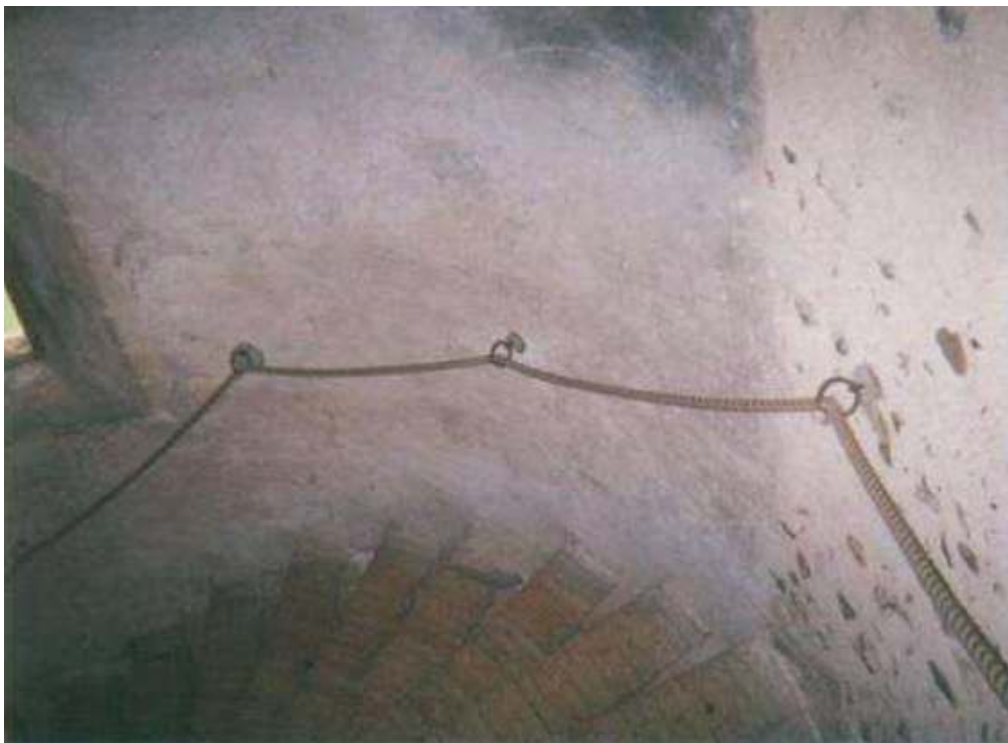
Coming down the corridor (which is actually the Minstrels' Gallery) towards the level two clue room:



Below, we're inside the clue room, or the Dormitory Chamber, as it is sometimes more accurately known. Is Pixel about to be unleashed, or maybe Merlin's Magic Box needs to be opened first?



And now we're leaving the clue room via a door just next to the left-hand window, and going deeper into the Dungeon via a spiral stairway of brick:



Next Issue: Our final visit to Hedingham Castle.

MY GAMESHOW GODS

Although Knightmare is by far and away my favourite gameshow (and TV programme, of course) of all time, I have, over the years, found myself enjoying certain other gameshows, particularly since getting Challenge TV in 2004 and reliving some of my old favourites. Here are some details about some of my favourite gameshows (my own *Gameshow Gods*, if you will), which you may or may not remember. Some of them have been reshown on Challenge, but some are just heady memories now. How many have you seen and enjoyed?

Countdown. (1982 onwards.)

With Carol Vorderman (1982 onwards), Richard Whiteley (1982-2005), Des Lynam (2005-2006), Des O'Connor (2007 onwards).

Is there anyone alive in this country today who can honestly say they've never watched an episode of Countdown? I doubt it. I used to watch this show after school when there was no good children's television on, and I used to enjoy it. I still watch it sometimes if I'm at a loose end, and I still enjoy it. The sudden death of Richard Whiteley in 2005 strangely affected me, because he'd been presenting Countdown for longer than I'd been alive. It's not nearly as good without him.

Blockbusters. (1983-1993.)

With Bob Holness.

I used to watch this one with my mother when I was very young. I was very pleased when Challenge bought it and I watched it avidly, but unfortunately they only have one series, which they show over and over again. This seems to be standard practice for many digital TV stations, a fact which I find quite disappointing.

Blind Date. (1985-2003.)

With Cilla Black.

My sister used to absolutely love this show; it was staple Saturday evening viewing in the early to mid nineties in my house. It was fun to laugh at some of the cocky young contestants, but my favourite shows were always the ones with the old people. Inevitably, there would be a message at the end saying that one of them had died since the programme was recorded, which we found morbidly amusing.

Telly Addicts. (1985-1998.)

With Noel Edmonds.

My parents used to watch this, and I gradually became more interested in it as I got older. My favourite series was the final one, which ditched the staple comfy-sofa look for a much more traditional running-around-aimlessly gameshow feel. My favourite challenge was Who's in the Box?, where the constants had to guess which celebrity was hiding in a box. Clues were given by means of the celebrity sticking various things out of slots in the box; I guessed Buster Merryfield (Uncle Albert Trotter) by his war medals! In my humble opinion, this was Noel Edmonds's finest hour, although I must admit to finding the excruciatingly annoying Deal or No Deal? strangely compulsive viewing.

Fifteen to One. (1988-2003.)

With William G. Stewart.

Like Countdown, I used to watch this after school when there was no good children's television. Most of the questions were much too hard for me, but it was exciting when I managed to answer one occasionally. William G. Stewart was a very engaging host, and managed to stop the show from being boring, which it was sometimes in danger of becoming. I enjoyed watching the guy who got the maximum score of 433 in 1999.

Fun House. (1989-1999.)

With Pat Sharp, Melanie Grant, Martina Grant.

How they managed to get eleven series out of this pointless gunge-fest is still beyond me! Pat Sharp's jokes were cringingly unfunny, the games were samey and pointless, and the twins were annoying. Despite all this, it was still a really good show! The Fun Cart Grand Prix was undoubtedly the highlight for me, and I used to enjoy trying to answer the Power Prize question correctly, a feat which many of the contestants seemed unable to achieve.

The Crystal Maze. (1990-1995.)

With Richard O'Brien (1990-1993), Edward Tudor Pole (1993-1995).

This was a brilliant show, the most engaging part of which was to see how incredibly thick and stupid the team members were, and the answer was nearly always the same: very incredibly thick and stupid! Both hosts did a fantastic job, although Richard O'Brien made it very obvious that he was only presenting the show until a "proper" acting job came his way. Watching series 4, it is a shame to see how bored Richard has obviously become with the whole thing. Personally, I think Ed was an excellent replacement, and it's a great shame that he only got two series. What is an even greater shame, in my opinion, is that Challenge have not renewed

their rights to Ed's two series, and seem reluctant to do so. Watching Richard's four series over and over again soon becomes boring, so bring back Ed, Barbara the computer and Starbuck, the ship's cat on the S. S. Atlantis, and let us have the full Crystal Maze experience again!

Finders Keepers. (1991-1995, 2006.)

With Neil Buchanan (1991-1995), Jeremy "the Voice" Stockwell (1991-1995), Diane Youdale (1995), Jeff Brazier (2006).

A fun and exciting romp, expertly presented by Neil Buchanan, who could be seen on CITV almost every day at that point. Neil and Jeremy the Voice did three fantastic series, but the fourth and final series was slightly disappointing, mainly because of the removal of the memory test games on the garage doors (which supposedly gave the show its name!), the replacement of the fun, exciting Fantasy Room with the dull, boring attic, and the completely unnecessary inclusion of former Gladiator Diane Youdale, who attempted (unsuccessfully, it has to be said) to upstage Neil at every turn. I must admit that I did enjoy the 2006 revival of the show, mainly because the garage doors game and the Fantasy Room (now called the Mystery Room) both returned. Although I would have liked to see Neil Buchanan shooting around the house on his Zimmer frame, Jeff Brazier did a surprisingly good job of presenting the show.

Supermarket Sweep. (1993-2001, 2007.)

With Dale Winton.

I used to watch this when I was at home during school hours, mainly when I was ill. I used to enjoy shopping with my mother at the supermarket, so I found this show quite engaging. I'll always remember the time when I saw David "Pickle" Learner on this show. When the voiceover guy announced his name, I couldn't quite believe that it was going to be the same person. But, sure enough, David (in his pink jersey) told Dale that he had done quite a bit of acting, and that his biggest role was an elf! What more evidence do you need?

Time Busters. (1993-1995.)

With Michael Troughton.

I only watched this because it was made by the same people as Nightmare, but it was a reasonably good show. I enjoyed spotting the Nightmare actors in it (Mark Knight, Samantha Perkins, Michael Cule and others), and that was my main reason for watching, really. The first series featured two teams per episode, fighting against each other to reach the Time Capsule, but this made the show feel cramped and rushed.

It was a good decision to have only one team per episode in series 2 and 3, although I don't think the show will ever be remembered as a classic.

Terror Towers. (1994-1996.)

With Steve Johnson (1994-1996), Francis Wright as Boris the Spider (1994-1996), Kim Frinkleton (1996).

This was an excellent scary gameshow on CITV, which featured two teams trying to win eyeballs in order to go through to the final in the Stinky Sink. Steve Johnson and Boris the Spider did an excellent job of making the first two series great fun and genuinely scary at the same time - the losing team, for example, had to remain guests at Terror Towers... forever! Unfortunately, the third and final series was not as good, suffering the same fate as Finders Keepers. Steve was given a pointless female co-host, which I didn't like at all. Kim's main role seemed to be to explain all the games, which had been done much more competently in the first two series either by Boris, or by Steve dressed up as the ghost of one of his ancestors. The games (in all three series, although the order was messed around with a lot in series 3) were the Shrinking Room, Boris's Tower, the Creepy Corridors and the Nightmare Room - brilliant stuff!

Incredible Games. (1994-1995.)

With David Walliams (1994), Gary Parker (1995).

A truly excellent children's gameshow, involving three kids travelling up a tower block in a lift, which had two very different but equally good series. The first series was shown on Sunday mornings on BBC2, and featured David Walliams (of Little Britain fame) as the Incredible Lift. The team had to complete a series of challenges and earn four hundred credits in order to go through the roof, which would mean that they'd win a prize. There were four challenges in each show, which were always played in the same order. The first game involved a blindfolded team member searching for three large maggots; the second involved collecting rubbish on a very messy planet; the third was the Dark Knight's deadly chess-like combat game; and the fourth involved swimming in a large bowl of alphabet soup to find letters and create words. The second series saw Gary Parker take over the role of the lift, which was just one of many changes. The team now worked to earn levels instead of credits, and were aiming for only two hundred instead of four hundred. The show was moved from Sunday mornings on BBC2 to Tuesday afternoons on BBC1, and many new games were introduced, including a school quiz with a spectral Victorian teacher, escaping from the Crystal Cavern, passing

slime-filled radioactive balloons along a wall without being able to see them, and fixing some severely ruptured pipes. The order of the games was swapped around and not every game featured in every episode, making for more variety than the first series. Two games from the first series were included in the second series, namely the Dark Knight and the alphabet soup game. This time, numbers were sometimes used instead of letters, meaning that equations rather than words had to be made, which was a lot harder. However, as I said, it was a very good show.

Fort Boyard. (1998-2001.)

With Leslie Grantham, Melinda Messenger, Geoffrey Bayldon.

I'm talking about the Channel 5 version here, not the God-awful Challenge version with DCI Burnside from The Bill! I used to enjoy watching this mainly because it was quite similar to The Crystal Maze, but it was fun to try and guess the riddles and passwords. Leslie Grantham was excellent as the brooding Boyard; it's a shame that the BBC tempted him away from Fort Boyard with great plans for his belated return to EastEnders, only to send him packing less than two years later when he did something slightly naughty.

Ice Warriors. (1998.)

With Dani Behr, Neil Fox.

This is something of a hidden gem, in my humble opinion. Okay, so it was essentially just Gladiators on ice, but the challenges were fun and the show was well presented. The background information and statistics given to each Ice Warrior were a nice touch. It only lasted for one short series, which was a bit of a shame.

Raven. (2002 onwards.)

With James McKenzie.

What more can I say about this show that I've already shared with you? It really is the most entertaining and original thing CBBC has come up with for a very long time, and I hope it continues for many more years. James McKenzie is excellent as Raven, although I like him better in the earlier series when he interacted more with the young warriors, and even had little jokes with them; nowadays, Raven is all business. Oh yes, and the less said about Raven: the Island the better!

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

Knightmare Locations Challenge

Find the names of the real-life Knightmare Locations hidden in the wordsearch.

Q	W	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	K	J	H	G	F	D	S	A
S	A	E	P	O	I	U	Y	T	R	E	W	Q	M	N	B	V	C	X	Z
D	F	A	G	H	J	K	L	Z	X	C	V	B	N	C	M	Q	W	E	R
O	T	L	Y	U	O	I	P	A	S	D	F	G	H	A	J	K	L	Z	X
R	C	D	V	B	N	M	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	S	I	O	P	A	S
F	R	A	M	L	I	N	G	H	A	M	C	A	S	T	L	E	D	F	H
O	G	N	H	J	K	L	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	L	Q	W	E	R	E
R	S	D	Y	Z	X	U	Y	Q	U	T	Y	L	K	E	A	P	B	T	D
D	D	D	U	L	C	I	T	W	Q	R	U	P	J	A	S	O	O	Y	I
C	F	O	I	K	V	O	R	E	W	E	I	O	H	C	D	I	D	U	N
A	G	W	O	J	B	P	A	C	A	S	T	L	E	R	I	S	I	N	G
S	H	N	P	H	N	Y	U	F	G	B	V	E	G	E	F	M	A	D	H
T	J	L	A	G	M	T	I	D	H	N	C	E	F	P	G	N	M	S	A
L	K	A	S	F	Q	R	O	S	J	M	X	D	D	R	H	B	C	A	M
E	L	N	D	D	W	E	P	A	K	L	Z	S	S	I	J	V	A	P	C
H	A	D	D	O	N	H	A	L	L	Y	L	C	A	O	K	C	S	O	A
Z	T	M	U	P	A	J	Q	W	E	T	K	A	P	R	L	X	T	I	S
X	R	U	I	O	S	U	J	H	R	R	J	S	O	Y	Z	Z	L	U	T
C	E	S	Z	L	S	Y	K	G	T	E	H	T	T	R	X	L	E	Y	L
V	W	E	X	K	D	T	L	F	Y	W	G	L	Y	E	C	K	F	T	E
B	Q	U	C	J	F	G	A	S	U	Q	F	E	U	W	V	H	G	R	E
N	M	M	V	H	G	B	P	O	I	A	D	S	I	Q	B	N	M	Q	W

Bodiam Castle
 Castle Acre Priory
 Castle Rising
 Framlingham Castle
 Haddon Hall
 Hedingham Castle
 Leeds Castle
 Orford Castle
 Weald and Downland Museum

THE BIG ISSUE

By Rosey Collins

This is the part of The Eye Shield that is fast running out of material, where we compare two similar Knightmare characters who fulfilled the same role in different series. This time, the supposedly evil but easily swayed merchants, Julius Scaramonger and Honesty Bartram.

Julius Scaramonger: "The Merchant Prince" from series 5 and 6, played by Rayner Bourton.

Advantages: Not counting Smirkenorff (who couldn't even talk yet), Scaramonger was the second new character to be introduced in series 5 (the first being Sylvester Hands) - and with him was introduced, arguably, the new Knightmare format. I know that some die-hard fans didn't like the new style of game play (although the shock of the new look in series 4 seems to have been worse for most), but personally I thought the change was a good one (not better).

Firstly, Scaramonger had the honour of introducing the team, and us, to the spyglass, and I suppose ultimately Lord Fear, which I really don't think can be a bad thing. Besides this, he was also the character who was perhaps most involved in the first mini-adventures that were given to dungeoneers in the later series. Yes, there were a few of these previously (Anthony's abysmal attempts to retrieve Folly's laughter in series 2; the pacts made between characters and dungeoneers in series 4...), but from series 5 onwards, the level-by-level tasks became a prominent feature of the quests, and in series 5 and 6 Scaramonger was involved with a lot of them.

I think that introducing a greater degree of plot to the whole concept of Knightmare did it good, and in series 5 Scaramonger was a good character to help carry it; he was non-aligned, and willing to help Lord Fear as long as the price was right - all the dungeoneer had to do was make a better offer:

"Like all good middlemen; and take money from both sides!" - Lord Fear.

Series 6 saw the introduction of Scaramonger's business rival, Ah Wok, which led to a degree of character development not often seen in Knightmare, and certainly not in characters who can boast only two series. Scaramonger pledged allegiance to the Opposition when he found

that Ah Wok was taking all the dungeoneers' money, making him harder to deal with; Chris, who had to play out the climax of series 6, found that gold was no longer enough to coax a key out of Scaramonger, and had to resort to violence.

In this scene, Scaramonger is drinking heavily as a direct result of his money troubles, and we hear mention of a hungry wife and children - another interesting little piece of character development. And for those of you who preferred old-style Nightmare, remember it was Scaramonger who gave a little nod back to the old days by employing as his servant "Young Grimwold", son of Mr. and Mrs. of the same name who provided some lovely moments in the very popular series 3. Rayner Bourton's performance was, in my opinion, marvellous, and he had an enjoyable way of bantering with the dungeoneers.

Disadvantages: Well, what a long list of advantages - and I must say that in stark contrast, I think the disadvantages are few. In fact, I am struggling to think of any. I suppose it could be said that Scaramonger never really provided much of a challenge - he only wanted gold or, a little later on, a knock on the head from a magic mallet, and perhaps didn't take quite as much persuasion as Honesty Bartram (whom you can read about in just a moment). But then, he was usually only a level 1 challenge.

Honesty Bartram: Bearded tradesman from series 8, played by Bill Cashmore.

Advantages: One of the invasion of new characters for the half-hearted attempts to revamp Nightmare in series 8, I shall start by saying that this mediocre Scaramonger substitute had rather a good name derived from his trade: Honesty, an ironic abstract noun, and Bartram from the word barter. Simple, but effective enough to give dungeoneers an idea of what they were dealing with.

Bill Cashmore did his best to make Bartram a humorous and loveable character, and in my opinion he didn't fall too wide of the mark. His running gag of searching among his person for the object of the dungeoneer's quest, on the off-chance that he could sell it to them, could have got a little old; but as he only met two dungeoneers, he pulled it off just fine. He had some enjoyable little scenes with dungeoneers, particularly Nathan, who had enough confidence and charisma to ham it up with Bartram and wave a gold bar under his nose, thereby allowing Bill

Cashmore to respond with a nice bit of convincing acting as he agonised for all of a few seconds over whether to risk Lord Fear's wrath.

Disadvantages: What was the difference between this guy and Julius Scaramonger? I won't be unkind and say there weren't any - Bill Cashmore did a good job of making the role his own - but honestly, they did fulfil the exact same function. Basic scenario: Lord Fear, in a moment of forgetfulness, leaves an important object in the hands of his merchant ally. Dungeoneer spies, and overhears Fear telling merchant not to sell them said object.

Dungeoneer finds some gold, persuades the merchant to exchange the object for it, and is consequently equipped to complete the level. The difference was that Bartram only had one short series and very few appearances in which to attempt to entertain us with these little subplots. Incidentally, there was some confusion with Daniel's exchange - it wasn't at all clear what Bartram wanted, and in the end he persuaded Daniel to part with his much-needed Sight potion.

Now, why? Was he being incredibly cunning, and was Daniel supposed to push harder to persuade him to take his key (not previously having had the opportunity to take anything more valuable)? Or was Bartram just aiding the disgruntled production team in their efforts to kill Daniel off and get Gideon the hell out of their nice quiet studio? We'll never know, but back to the point - Bill Cashmore did his best. Sadly, however, Honesty Bartram was destined for the same fate as so many series 8 characters: not enough time in which to develop and reach their full potential.

TRADE IN THE OLD FOR THE NEW

By Richard Temple

Skarkill and his company stood waiting at the edge of the forest, awaiting the arrival of Honesty Bartram.

"Dratted peddler! Wish he'd hurry up," Skarkill grumbled. "It'll be dusk soon and, Lordship or no Lordship, I ain't too happy about traipsing through that forest when night comes."

Sly Hands nodded in agreement. "Yeah, that's when all those pookas come out - at the Wit... Wick ...Witchy... er, when it gets really dark, like."

Julius Scaramonger, meanwhile, stood silently nearby, listening and wondering just who this Honesty Bartram was, and what Lord Fear required with two traders; surely he himself would be more than capable of handling whatever business Lord Fear had in mind. Just then, footsteps were heard hurrying down the path. Skarkill grasped his axe tightly just in case, as a figure loomed out of the shadows.

"Good evening to you, my dear Goblin Master, and Master Sly Hands as well," Honesty Bartram said good-humouredly. "This is quite the gathering of people allied with a certain gentleman, now isn't it?"

Just then, Bartram noticed the other human in the group - a well-dressed man in expensive clothes. Bartram looked confused, but assumed that this was another Opposition minion.

"Good evening to you, sir. Bartram's me name and bartering's me game. My customers (my satisfied customers) call me Honesty Bartram. What's your name?"

"This, Bartram, is your predecessor; the notorious Merchant Prince, Julius Scaramonger himself." Skarkill sneered when he saw the looks on both traders' faces - resentment and jealousy registered on Julius's face, and a slight annoyance registered on Bartram's, as he was obviously none too pleased to have Julius back on the scene. "But we don't have time to stand here chatting - his Lordship wants to see you both, so come on."

The group set off towards Marblehead. As soon as they were out of sight, two other figures appeared from hiding.

"Oh dear. If Lord Fear wants both his traders back then he must be up to something really bad," Sidriss worried out loud to Elita. "Maybe he wants to buy another red dragon, or something worse! I'm not quite sure what could be worse than a red dragon, but I'm sure there must be something."

"Well, standing here twittering isn't going to help, is it, bird brain!" Elita snapped. "You wait here. I'm going to find the Elf Path to Dunshelm and tell Old Beardy that Lord Fear's up to something."

Elita disappeared into the woods; Sidriss stood nervously, fidgeting and fretting. "Oh dear, I must do something... I know! I can try to delay them with some magic... If I can just remember how to do that HOLD spell right... What if it goes wrong? I could be captured, or fed to the goblins! But I must do something! Father's always saying that people should stand firm against Lord Fear. I will do it!"

Sidriss made up her mind and determinedly walked into the forest, following Skarkill and his band.

Meanwhile, Skarkill's band was making good time back towards Marblehead. Julius, however, was still sulking at being joined by his successor.

"This Johnny come-lately has got no business being here," he muttered to himself. "I'm the Opposition trader; why should I have to share the job with some grotty little peddler?"

The troop carried on walking. As they approached a rocky outcrop, none of them noticed the sinister shadow skulking behind the rocks. Suddenly, Skarkill heard something as they passed by the outcrop. He looked up.

"LOOK OUT! ROCK SLIDE!" he yelled, as tons of rock suddenly came crashing down towards them.

Skarkill dived for cover, while Grippa and Rhark ran into the trees. Sly Hands was bringing up the rear of the group, so was outside of the danger zone, but Bartram and Julius were not so lucky. Neither of them had time to react before the heavy rocks came crashing down, mortally wounding them both. From high above, on the outcrop from where the

rockslide had started, The Atlantian smiled to himself as he surveyed his handiwork.

"Ah, The Atlantian earns his pay. That rockslide took care of both traders in one fell swoop, and it looked like an accident. Queen Maldame will be pleased."

The Atlantian laughed cruelly to himself, and started back towards Greenshades, leaving the scene of carnage he had just caused without a second thought. Down below, Skarkill had narrowly avoided being crushed, but had been knocked groggy by the slide. He tried to contact Lord Fear with his spyglass.

"Lordship... Lordship... Oh, this is very unlovely..."

Skarkill blacked out just as Lord Fear responded. "Well, what is it, Skarkill? Skarkill? Skarkill, respond! You've just interrupted my weekly chat with Count Brinkator, so this had better be important! Skarkill, I'm in no mood for prank calls! I'm going to count to five, Skarkill!"

Sly Hands' face suddenly appeared on the viewing screen. "Oh, yer poshness, there's been a terrible accident! Skarkill's out cold like, and Bartram and Scaramonger are both crushed under some rocks!"

"WHAT?!" Lord Fear raged. "I said I wanted them here ALIVE!"

"It weren't our fault, yer Lordship!" Hands protested. "The whole mountain just seemed to come crashing down round our heads!"

"I'm coming there right away, Hands, to see if anything can be salvaged," Lord Fear announced. "DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING!"

Lord Fear cut transmission and Sly started to tend to Skarkill. Just then, he heard someone coming along the path, and he quickly hid. Sidriss appeared around the corner and looked in horror at the sight before her.

"Oh my!" she said, seeing the rockfall and the two mortally wounded traders. Even though she knew that neither of them would help her if the tables were reversed, she immediately went to them and tried to help. Both traders had severe wounds and had lost a lot of blood.

"Only a third level Healing spell would help them now," Sidriss sighed, "but I'm not competent enough. And yet I can't just let them die without trying! I know! Maybe I can use the UNITE spell I learned to unite the blood with their bodies, and then cast a simpler healing spell."

She stepped back and began spellcasting: "Spellcasting: U-N-I-T-E!"

The spell took immediate effect, but not the effect Sidriss had in mind.

"Oh...OH NO! NO, NO! STOP!" she cried, as the traders' bodies began to glow with magic energy, and then fuse together into one single body.

"No, I didn't mean to unite the bodies! I meant to unite the blood with the bodies! Oh, dear me! Dispel: T-I-E..."

A fireball suddenly flew out of nowhere and hit Sidriss in the stomach. She flew back along the path and banged her head on a tree stump. She looked up and saw Lord Fear standing before her.

"I really must thank you, my dear Sidriss," he smirked at her. "You've just saved me the trouble of performing that spell myself. I had intended to combine Honesty Bartram and Julius Scaramonger, and now you've done it for me. Hands, wake Skarkill up and bring our new trader along with you."

Sidriss followed Lord Fear's gesture and saw, lying in the road, where once there had been both Bartram and Scaramonger, now only one single person - a youngish-looking man. Hands got the groggy Goblin Master back up to his feet, and they both hauled the man up to his and shook him. He groggily opened his eyes and looked directly at Sidriss. Sidriss was taken by how blue they were; they seemed to stare right through into her soul, in a piercing gaze. Yet there was something cold and ruthless about that gaze. Sidriss' head hurt and the world began to spin, and then blackness.

"Sidriss? Sidriss, can you hear me? Speak to me, my child." The majestic and warm voice that Sidriss knew and loved so well cut through her grogginess.

"Father." She opened her eyes and saw that she was in the antechamber of Knightmare Castle, where her father Hordriss was tending to her. Elita, Pickle and Treguard all looked on with concern. "What happened?"

"When Elita arrived with her message, I sent her back with Pickle to find out what exactly Lord Fear was up to," Treguard explained. "They found you lying in the middle of the path in the Forest of Dunn and brought you back."

"What happened, Sid?" Elita asked, and Sidriss began to tell them what she'd seen.

Meanwhile, in Wolfenden, a stranger wheeled his cart into the centre of the market square. No one knew who he was, but the villagers were more bothered about the disappearance of the two local traders, Julius Scaramonger and Honesty Bartram. Suddenly, the young man's voice cut through the crowd like a knife. His sales pitch resembled Honesty Bartram's.

"Roll up, roll up, folks! Come and trade with Wolfenden's newest trader!"

The crowds gathered and started buying from this friendly young newcomer. He was dressed in fine cream and blue robes, not unlike Julius Scaramonger's, and he had a scar visible on his left cheek, but most noticeable were his piercing blue eyes. Soon the crowd thinned out; the new merchant was just packing away when a slight buzzing sound caught his attention. He picked up his spyglass and answered.

"Yes, milord?"

"So, how did it go?" Lord Fear enquired of his new servant.

"Like taking candy from a baby," the trader purred in velvety tones, which only just masked the evil undertones.

"Good, good!" Lord Fear responded. "Once you're integrated into the community, we can really put you to work on the Powers That Be and their dratted dungeoneers. Oh, by the way, have you thought of a name for yourself yet?"

"Yes, milord."

"Well then, spit it out!"

"Deal, sir, Edward Deal."

"Hmm, a bit corny, but it'll do," Fear considered. "Very well, dismissed!"

Edward Deal replaced the spyglass and was about to leave, when someone tapped him on the shoulder. He turned around and came face to face with a dark figure.

"Sorry, the stall's closed for the evening."

The figure took a drag on his cigarette and blew it out thoughtfully. "I'm not here to buy; I'm here with a proposition. For a large payment in gold, a certain party (whom I represent) would like some information on one Lord Fear."

Deal's eyes lit up. "What would you like to know?"

Shadow Voice smiled to himself, for it was clear to him that the status quo would remain unchanged, even with Lord Fear's meddling attempts to create a trader loyal only to him. Such a thing, Shadow Voice concluded, was truly impossible to find.

THE END

POETRY CORNER

We make one of our rare poetic visits to series 6 today, to join January and her three friends on their merry yet flawed journey.

Jan and friends from Shropshire's vales
Did not make the best of tales.
In the forest's leafy glade,
Tiny Motley asked for aid.
Sidriss, then, they had to find,
And plead with her to change her mind.
Jan and Motley walked the path
To the roundhouse at Holngarth.
Objects here were on display,
The spyglass showed them, clear as day,
Hordriss with his threats so grand,
But Lord Fear had the upper hand.
Magic powder was the key
To setting frozen Sidriss free.
O'er the lake, via wooden barge,
Sidriss soon made Motley large.
He then gave Jan the magic word
To get past Dreadnort's threats absurd.
Down the shaft to level two,
Ridolfo gave a number clue.
Lord Fear's ring was then procured,
But useful info was ignored.
Past Julius and his dud spell,
Sadly, they did not do well.
Hands was looking for the ring,
And Jan just offered him the thing!
Trapped within the magic rope,
This quest no longer had a hope!

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Character Descriptions:

- 1.) Gundrada. Episode 407. Nicky.
- 2.) Cedric. Episode 107. Richard I.
- 3.) Fatilla. Episode 402. Helen II.
- 4.) Merlin. Episode 308. Ross.
- 5.) Lord Fear. Episode 504. Sarah.
- 6.) Sidriss. Episode 810. Oliver.
- 7.) Sylvester Hands. Episode 501. Catherine.
- 8.) Hordriss. Episode 316. Chris II.
- 9.) Folly. Episode 107. Richard I.
- 10.) Grimaldine. Episode 702. Simon IV.
- 11.) Julius Scaramonger. Episode 504. Sarah.
- 12.) Gumboil. Episode 105. Danny.

Knightmare Locations Challenge:

Q	W	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	O	P	L	K	J	H	G	F	D	S	A
S	A	E	P	O	I	U	Y	T	R	E	W	Q	M	N	B	V	C	X	Z
D	F	A	G	H	J	K	L	Z	X	C	V	B	N	C	M	Q	W	E	R
O	T	L	Y	U	O	I	P	A	S	D	F	G	H	A	J	K	L	Z	X
R	C	D	V	B	N	M	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	S	I	O	P	A	S
F	R	A	M	L	I	N	G	H	A	M	C	A	S	T	L	E	D	F	H
O	G	N	H	J	K	L	Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	L	Q	W	E	R	E
R	S	D	Y	Z	X	U	Y	Q	U	T	Y	L	K	E	A	P	B	T	D
D	D	D	U	L	C	I	T	W	Q	R	U	P	J	A	S	O	O	Y	I
C	F	O	I	K	V	O	R	E	W	E	I	O	H	C	D	I	D	U	N
A	G	W	O	J	B	P	A	C	A	S	T	L	E	R	I	S	I	N	G
S	H	N	P	H	N	Y	U	F	G	B	V	E	G	E	F	M	A	D	H
T	J	L	A	G	M	T	I	D	H	N	C	E	F	P	G	N	M	S	A
L	K	A	S	F	Q	R	O	S	J	M	X	D	D	R	H	B	C	A	M
E	L	N	D	D	W	E	P	A	K	L	Z	S	S	I	J	V	A	P	C
H	A	D	D	O	N	H	A	L	L	Y	L	C	A	O	K	C	S	O	A
Z	T	M	U	P	A	J	Q	W	E	T	K	A	P	R	L	X	T	I	S
X	R	U	I	O	S	U	J	H	R	R	J	S	O	Y	Z	Z	L	U	T
C	E	S	Z	L	S	Y	K	G	T	E	H	T	T	R	X	L	E	Y	L
V	W	E	X	K	D	T	L	F	Y	W	G	L	Y	E	C	K	F	T	E
B	Q	U	C	J	F	G	A	S	U	Q	F	E	U	W	V	H	G	R	E
N	M	M	V	H	G	B	P	O	I	A	D	S	I	Q	B	N	M	Q	W